



In defence of the International Workers Association and its sections

Secretariat of the IWA

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The Secretariat of the International Workers Association

secretariado@iwa-ait.org

+34 644 580 198

C/Joaquin Costa 34 Baixos

08001 Barcelona

España

The International Secretariat of the IWA (International Workers Association) wants to publicly condemn a series of attacks that our sections have been suffering for many years in several parts of the world. Once again, we are forced to defend our international organization from similar aggressions.

It is hard to say when all these attacks started, but we will take the risk and say that they started in 2016, when still being sections of the IWA, the Spanish CNT and the Italian USI published statements about the need to relaunch the IWA. These sections had been proposing to the IWA Congress a bunch of motions that were rejected. They proposed to give the majority of the votes in the IWA to a few sections, including the predominant Spanish CNT, and to give access to the IWA exclusively to "big" organizations. The proposed changes in the voting system were specially conceived to ensure that the three sections that wanted to "relaunch" the IWA could control the organization.

In that way, the "relaunch" of the IWA could have been approved with the only votes of these 3 larger sections and without taking into account the opinions of the majority of its sections.

It was about the Spanish CNT, the Italian USI and the German FAU.

The USI had been causing controversy for many years because they were running for labour elections in the so called RSU in Italy (election of official workers' representatives at the work places). Obviously, this was a failure to respect the principle of Direct Action as the fighting method of the working class. So, the USI was accepting the delegation of the struggle to executive councils, vertical organisms and intermediaries that dilute and dampen the conflict between workers and bosses. They were helping to put the workers' ability to decide and fight for ourselves in the hands of labour bureaucracies supported by the states and the employer associations.

The FAU, in turn, had been failing to respect the agreements of the IWA about international contacts for many years. Behind the backs of other sections they were supporting unions that clearly stand against anarcho-syndicalism. It was about organizations with vertical internal procedures, linked to political parties and which receive subsidies from the state. They ended up supporting even unions that are openly hostile to some sections of the IWA.

Inside the CNT in Spain, at the time, a faction that wanted to divert the internal procedures from the principles of anarchism was emerging. At the national Congress held by the Spanish CNT in Cordoba in 2010, this faction managed to grant big power to the organization's committees. The consequences of that was the transformation of a horizontal organization into an organization ruled by profound authoritarianism. The lack of internal horizontality triggered a series of massive purges affecting dozens of local unions that were protesting or raising criticism against the new authoritarian dynamics. Those that dared to criticize the absolute absence of transparency in the management of the funds by the committees were expelled. And the lack of transparency led to embezzlements, for which no secretary had to take responsibility. Those who protested against the introduction of paid union leaders in the organization and the reconciliation with political parties were expelled too. The doors of the committees were opened to professional politicians and even to employers with waged workers. All of that made possible a transition from anarcho-syndicalism and the values of anarchism to a neutral syndicalism, reformism and even social-democracy. All this process translated into the current CNT-CIT.

After all their proposals being rejected by the IWA, these 3 sections decided to promote a split in The International. It was about a split that hadn't even been discussed by the membership inside some of these sections.

At this point, the Spanish CNT, the USI and the FAU, called for an International Conference that finally took place in Barakaldo, Spain, to discuss the split from the IWA. In spite of being an attempt to split the IWA they named it "conference for the relaunch of the IWA". Such a "relaunch" was never agreed or even discussed at any official congress of The International.

At that time the Secretariat of the IWA published a statement entitled "Misconceptions over Split Conference". In the statement it was made clear that the conference was taking place against the statutes and the agreements of the IWA congresses. In short, the conference hadn't been called by the IWA or any of its international agreements.

The conference was attended by USI, FAU, IP (Polland), ESE (Greece), the Spanish CNT, the French CNT, FORA (Argentina) and Rocinante (Greece). The IWW from the USA, UK and Germany were present as observers. They had invited, not all full right members of the IWA, but other organizations unaffiliated with it, with the intention to make them take part in the split. They were "relaunching" the IWA behind IWA's back. Nevertheless, not all delegations present in the conference had mandates to join this new International.

Eventually, only 4 sections that had ever been members of the IWA joined the splitting faction: the Spanish CNT, USI, FAU and FORA. All the remaining sections of the IWA staid faithful to its principles, agreements and statutes.

After all that fait accompli, the IWA Congress held in Warsaw agreed to disaffiliate the Spanish CNT, USI and FAU because they failed to respect horizontality in decision making, the statutes and their duty to pay dues to the IWA.

All these efforts to divide and destroy the IWA made by the National Committee of the Spanish CNT in collusion with USI and FAU are nothing but an attack to the principles and aims of the IWA and anarcho-syndicalism. It was clear that these 3 sections were acting against the IWA and many times behind the backs of their own membership. That's what clearly happened inside the Spanish CNT, where the National Committee unilaterally decided to stop paying dues to the IWA. The rank-and-file members were still paying their full dues, but the National Committee was keeping the part of their dues that was meant to be sent to the IWA. All that without any agreement of the organization.

As they didn't manage to convince their own membership they came up with a clear strategy: to force the disaffiliation from the IWA due to an intentional failure to pay dues while setting up the new parallel International.

Shortly after the disaffiliation this splitting faction chose a new name "International Labour Confederation ILC / Confederación Internacional del Trabajo CIT" and its members were IWW-USA, IWW-Canada, FORA (Argentina), ESE (Greece), CNT-CIT (Spain), FAU (Germany), USI (Italy) and IP (Poland).

But the Spanish CNT, which was bragging that there was an internal consensus about the split among its membership, didn't manage to conceal the situation. Dozens of local unions had been expelled against the statutes and agreements, other left the organization willingly, and others remained in the organization but still disagreeing. The reformist diversion from anarcho-syndicalism resulted in more than 30 local unions leaving the Spanish CNT all over the country from 2010.

All that situation forced an important number of the fraudulently expelled and disaffiliated local unions to re-tighten their old federal bonds, to reassemble and to ask the IWA for their re-affiliation to it. This CNT-AIT was acknowledged as the heir of the IWA's trajectory in the Spanish region at the IWA Extraordinary Congress in Belgrade in 2017.

But the attacks launched by those who wanted to "relaunch" the IWA didn't stop when they got disaffiliated.

In 2018 the efforts by the CNT-CIT to harass and destroy the IWA in Spain didn't stop, but increased greatly and went further. That year CNT-CIT brought a lawsuit against 7 local unions of the Spanish CNT-AIT because they were using the acronym CNT and "their" logo. This time CNT-CIT was asking for a 350.007 EUR compensation for moral damages. Eventually, the claims were rejected by the courts and they had to give up trying to use the courts to attack the Spanish CNT-AIT.

Shortly after that, the attacks continued with the fraudulent disaffiliation of the Local Federation of Madrid from the CNT-CIT, the assault to their premises and criminal complaints against anarcho-syndicalist activists in the city. These aggressions too were publicly condemned by the Secretariat of the IWA in solidarity with all these comrades.

The CNT-CIT used the courts once more to attack the Spanish CNT-AIT in mid 2020, when 19 local unions were sued before the National Court (Audiencia Nacional). This incident is heavily loaded with meaning because this court is the continuation of the Court for Public Order (Tribunal de Orden Público) specially created by the fascist dictatorship to persecute anarchists and other antifascist activists. This time the ILC-CIT was asking for a 950.019 EUR compensation because the sued unions were still using the acronym CNT-AIT.

The ILC-CIT needs to present itself as a combative and even an anti-capitalist organization in order to differentiate themselves from their competitors and sell their "union services", their product, to the discontented working class. But their practices are the very same as those of the big labour bureaucracies subsidized by the state and the capitalists, always ready to betray the workers' struggle and show their submission to the system.

It happened more than often that a workers' organization or a split from it, once in the past a revolutionary one, got perfectly

integrated into the capitalist system. The truth is that there will always be organizations willing to promote the kind of syndicalism that benefits capitalism: professional union leaders, strong personal leadership, authoritarianism, delegation of the workers' struggle to professional councils or committees, limiting the struggle to lawsuits and keeping any revolutionary content out of their organizations. In short, a kind of syndicalism that easily leads to corruption and authoritarianism.

In opposition to all that, the IWA was not established to sell revolutionary or capitalist proclamations. It was established to spread the emancipation ideas among the working class. Because only by spreading solidarity and revolutionary awareness among the oppressed we will manage to turn the daily struggle against the injuries by the bosses of today into the struggle for the society without bosses of tomorrow. It might take time, but there are no possible shortcuts. Only by spreading revolutionary ideas and putting them in practice we will promote a revolutionary change in society.

But it's not only the Spanish CNT-AIT that got attacked. Other IWA section have been attacked by local organizations as the IWW of Melbourne, Australia. This local branch of the IWW, with the consent of the IWW from USA, Canada and Australia attacked the Melbourne Anarchist Club and our comrades from the ASF-IWA in Melbourne. The case started when the Melbourne IWW claimed the ownership of the premises of the

Club and its content. And they ended up suing the club members before the courts and publishing a list with 22 names of the club members. They were helping the police and the Australian fascists groups to spot their targets.

The case with the Melbourn Anarchist Club and the case with the Spanish CNT-AIT have something in common: the ILC-CIT is cooperating with the states so the states can finish us off.

Anarcho-syndicalism is not as vigorous as it used to be in some regions one century ago, even if it is now growing in regions where it never was present before. And this was made clear with new affiliations to the IWA during the international congress held in Melbourne in December 2019. But specially in Europe, this is the harsh reality. A reality that can be explained by numerous factors, among which, obviously, the extermination of a generation of anarcho-syndicalist fighters by totalitarian regimes of all sorts, including the wrongly called "socialist" regimes. This reality can be also explained by the appearance of the consumerist society and the fact that the revolutionary ideas are rare among the working people. Some will say that this reality is a consequence of our principles, and that we must abandon them if we want to adapt to modern times. The abandonment of the principles and the giving up of the revolutionary struggle simply lead to the integration of the workers' organizations to the capitalist market.

In short, the ILC-CIT has a clear goal: to prevent the development of any anarcho-syndicalist organization that, with

its practice and revolutionary ideas, could compete with them and reveal their true nature.

The Secretariat of the IWA opposes all these attacks and condemns them publicly so that all revolutionary workers' organization all around the globe can witness them. And we urge all them not to stay impassive and to judge on their own the true nature and character of these organizations that, in spite of their long tradition, now are acting as known enemies of the working class.

The Secretariat of the IWA.

**It's always
a good time
to start
fighting
capitalism
and its allies**

**OR
G@NIZE!**

International Workers' Association - IWA